

Truth and Love Lesson 3 - Love

Ephesians 4:15 (NASB95) but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

- I. **Matthew 22:35-40 (NASB95)** 35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37 And He said to him, “‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ 38 “This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 “The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ 40 “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”
 - a. **35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”**
 - i. There is a fundamental flaw in this lawyer’s question, regardless of the fact that he’s attempting to trap Jesus in His answer, the question is flawed.
 - ii. The reason the question is flawed is because he assumes the core purpose of the law is for it to be obeyed so one can clean themselves up.
 - iii. The law wasn’t put in place for us to clean ourselves up:
 1. **Romans 3:20 (NLT)** 20 For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.
 - iv. How sinful does the law show us to be?
 1. **Romans 5:20 (NASB95)** The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,
 - v. The primary purpose of the law is not for you and I to obey it and fulfill it. Someone else was going to do that:
 1. **Matthew 5:17-18 (NASB95)** 17 “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.
 2. **John 19:28 (NASB95)** 28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, “I am thirsty.”
 - vi. By fulfilling the law, Jesus removed it as a barrier between us and Him because He took the requirement of living it perfectly upon Himself. With the requirement of the law removed from you and I, we are now free.
 1. **Romans 8:3-4 (NASB95)** 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

- vii. Think about for a moment if you weren't free from this requirement. What would day to day life look like for you and I? The burden would be enormous!
- viii. Where would my focus be? On me!!
- ix. If the burden to fulfill the law is no longer on me, I'm now free to what? To love Him and others because I'm no longer fixed and focused on myself and carrying the burden of the law around.

b. **37 And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.” 38 “This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 “The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’**

- i. With the requirement of fulfilling the law removed we are now free to love.
- ii. Jesus is very deliberate in describing how this works:
- iii. “The first and the greatest commandment is to love God”
- iv. “The second is like it, love your Neighbor”

1. Did you notice what He did? Jesus establishes priority for us. Jesus lets us know our first love is His Father, everyone else comes after that.

a. **Jeremiah 29:13 (NASB95)** ‘You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

- i. Our first love is for our Heavenly Father. After that our love is for our Neighbor.
- ii. Putting the love of anything or anyone above the love for Him makes those things idols.

a. **Idol** - *“an object of reverence.”*

- iii. When He is not our highest “object of reverence” we are now living our lives outside of the sequence He gave us. We can't expect that we can do this and there not be consequences.
- iv. 1st Vertical relationship, 2nd Horizontal relationships
- v. This brings us to another important point that Jesus has laid out here.

II. **When God sets a sequence for how a Spiritual Truth is to work, nothing can change that reality.**

- a. Let me explain by starting with a question: Can two Spiritual Truths ever become heresy?
- b. The answer is yes. When they are taken out of sequence.
- c. Example: God has also given the gift of Salvation. God has given the gift of repentance of sins to Believers. We see in scripture though that repenting of sins comes after one is saved not before. Doing this out of sequence has consequences.
- d. This brings us back to our passage.
- e. Jesus told us that the First and Greatest commandment is to Love God with all of ourselves and the Second is to love our neighbor.

1. The other reason that God set this sequence of events up this way is because it won't work doing it in reverse.

2. We can't love people and expect that it fulfills the requirement of loving God first.
3. The reality is that it is our learning to Love Him wholeheartedly that allows us to then love our neighbors in the way He is asking us to love them.

- i. **1 John 4:19-21 (NASB95)** 19 We love, because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

f. **40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."**

1. So, what is the answer for how we learn to love others? The answer is: Fall in love with Jesus Christ first. When we have our hearts captured by Jesus Christ, we will find that our attitude and heart towards others will follow.
2. How do you fall in love with Jesus Christ? Spend time with Him!
 - i. Get into His Word.
 - ii. Speak with Him in prayer.
 - iii. Use your spiritual gift (As He reveals it to you).

III. Next for us is to define love. Scripture defines love in 1 Corinthians:

- a. **1 Corinthians 13:4-8,13 (NASB95)** 4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away...13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1. **Love** – Love (Agape) is that quality of love which is unconditional, sacrificial. Agape does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Agape is self-sacrificial and seeks the benefit of the one loved (without expecting anything in return), a love which means death to self since the essence of self is selfishness, self-will and self-gratification. Agape is a love activated by personal choice (enabled by God working within us) and is not based on our feelings toward the one loved. Agape is not a love that we try to manufacture but allow God to grow in us.

2. **Love is patient** – makrothymeō (mak-roth-oo-meh'-o) - to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others

- i. to be mild and slow in avenging
- ii. to be long-suffering, slow to anger, slow to punish

- a. **Luke 6:27-28 (NASB95)** 27 "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

- iii. **Love is kind** – Chresteuomai from chrestós = To be kind and gracious. It is an attitude of being willing to help or assist rendering gracious, well-disposed service to others. It is active goodwill. It not only feels generous, it is generous.

- i. **Matthew 8:1-3 (NASB95)** 1 When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. 2 And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” 3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

- b. **5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,**

- 1. **It does not seek its own** - (zeteo) It is an attempt to learn something by careful investigation or searching.

- i. In other words, it’s consistently thinking about myself first.
 - ii. Seeking one’s own is to be pondering, searching, closely investigating what works best for me in any given situation.
 - iii. “What do I want?”, “What do I need?” is the focus of seeking one’s own. We are told that this is not love.

- a. **1 John 3:16 (NASB95)** 16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

- c. **6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;**

- 1. **Unrighteousness** - *“All unrighteousness is the negation of truth. Love expresses itself in truth, and all conduct that satisfies holy love satisfies truth.”*

- 2. **Rejoices with the truth:** *To rejoice with the truth means to be glad about behavior in agreement with the truth of God’s Word.*

- 3. Let’s look at an example:

- i. **Mark 3:1-6 (NASB95)** 1 He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered. 2 They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. 3 He said to the man with the withered hand, “Get up and come forward!” 4 And He said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?” But they kept silent. 5 After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. 6 The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

- a. **4 And He said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?” But they kept silent. 5 After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart...**

1. These people's hearts had grown so hard that Jesus had to ask them if they actually thought God's Law (Truth) would want them to treat a person this way!

IV. **7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away...13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.**

a. **8 Love never fails** - When Paul says "agape love never fails", he's saying a couple of things:

1. When we choose to agape love someone it always has value.
2. Agape love is never going to cease, it is eternal and will remain forever: **8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away...13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.**
 - i. In other words, Paul is telling us here that the spiritual gifts that each of us have, all of them will eventually go away, but faith, hope and love will remain. Love will be the greatest of those things that remain.
 - ii. As truly wonderful each of our spiritual gifts are to and for the Body of Christ, they're still only temporary gifts. If we want our gifts to have an eternal impact for Christ then we must do them in love.

a. **1 Corinthians 16:14 (NASB95)** 14 Let all that you do be done in love.

iii. Notice what Paul has to say to the Corinthians at the beginning of this chapter about love and spiritual gifts:

a. **1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NASB95)** 1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

i. **It profits me nothing** – of no (eternal) value.

1. **John 6:63 (NASB95)** 63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

V. Why do we want people to know truth?

- a. Because of what we've experienced in our lives!
- b. When we met Christ, we found freedom.
- c. As we have grown in our relationship with Christ, we've found freedom.

1. Why do we find freedom? Because He is Truth and Truth sets us free:
 - i. **John 8:32 (NLT)** And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
 2. As we engage our world around us, is there a more loving prayer that I can pray for a person than this: “Father, would You show me how to love them the way that You love them?”
 3. “Would You reveal Yourself to them in a way that causes them to see You for who You truly are so they could be free?”
- d. We want people to be free, to be sanctified, simply to be able to be in fellowship with their Creator and to gain everything out of this life that He has intended for them.
 - e. Walking outside of truth prevents this for them.